ELL Reader

Science

Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Expository Nonfiction	• Gardening • Growing Vegetables • Problem Solving	• Diagram • Labels • Definitions	• Expressions with *green*

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ISBN 0-328-14165-8

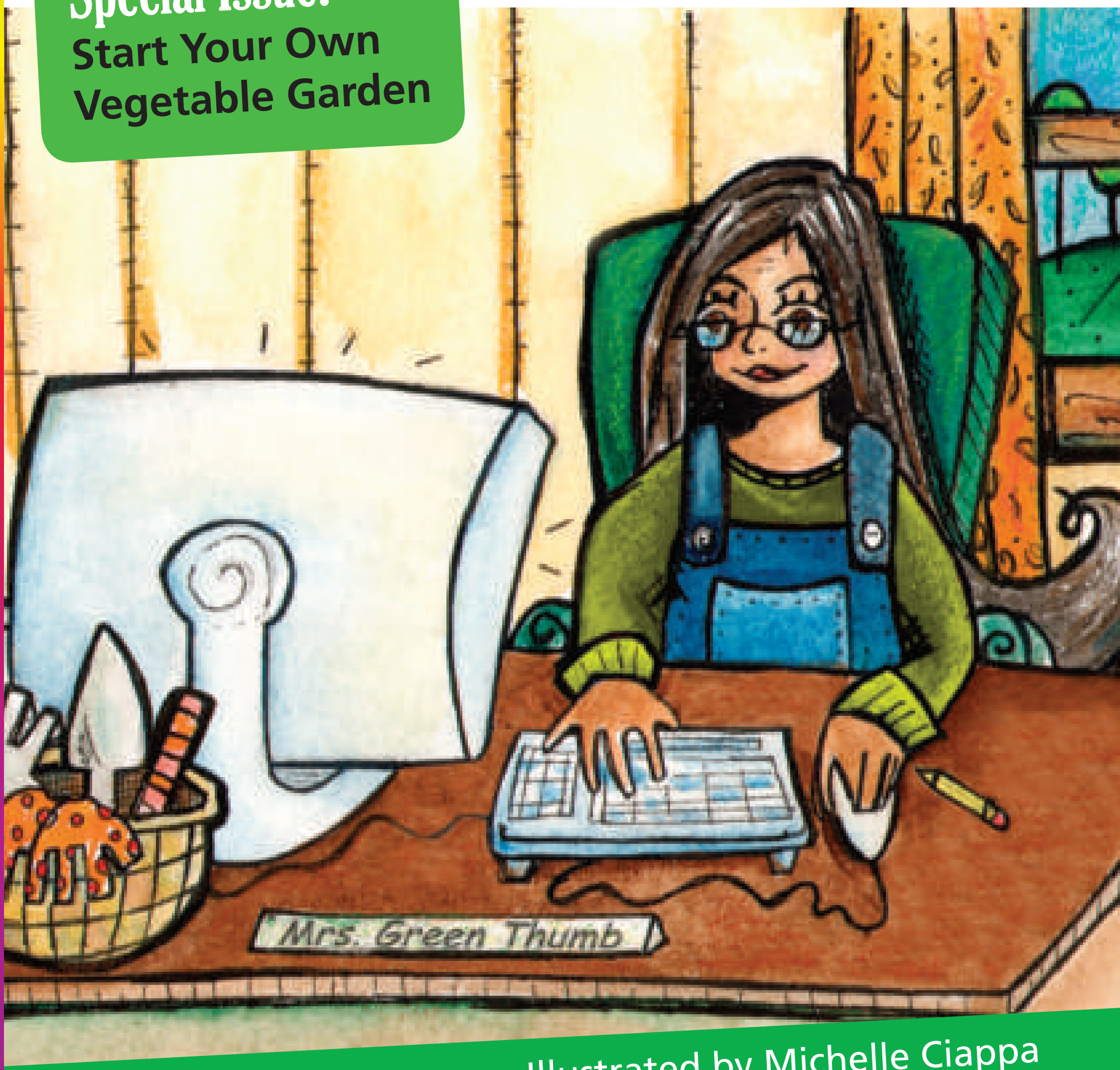
Science

Ask Mrs. Green Thumb

A Gardening Magazine for Kids

by Maggie Potts

Special Issue:
Start Your Own Vegetable Garden



Illustrated by Michelle Ciappa

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A Gardening Magazine for Kids

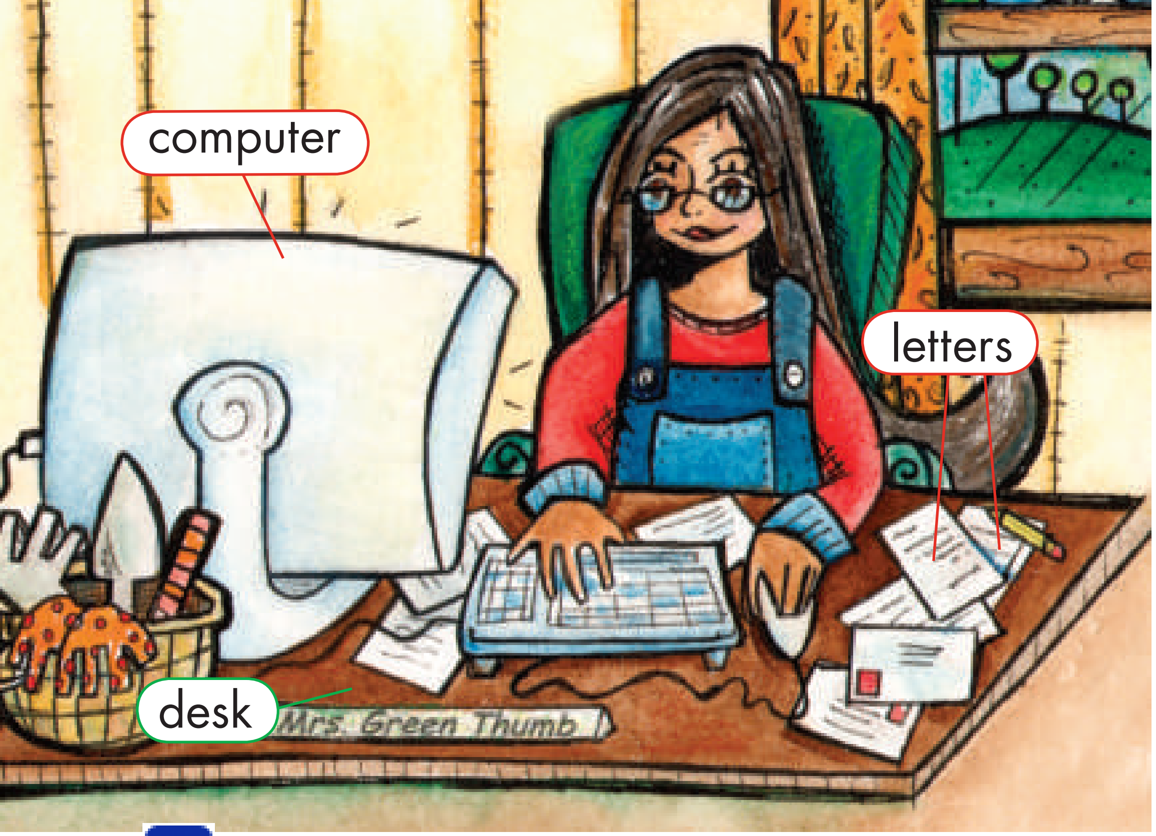
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Sales Offices: Needham, Massachusetts • Duluth, Georgia • Glenview, Illinois
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Planning Your Vegetable Garden

It's a great idea to start your own vegetable garden. First you must decide what vegetables you want to plant. Start by making a list of the vegetables you like to eat. Then use that list to decide what vegetables you want to grow.

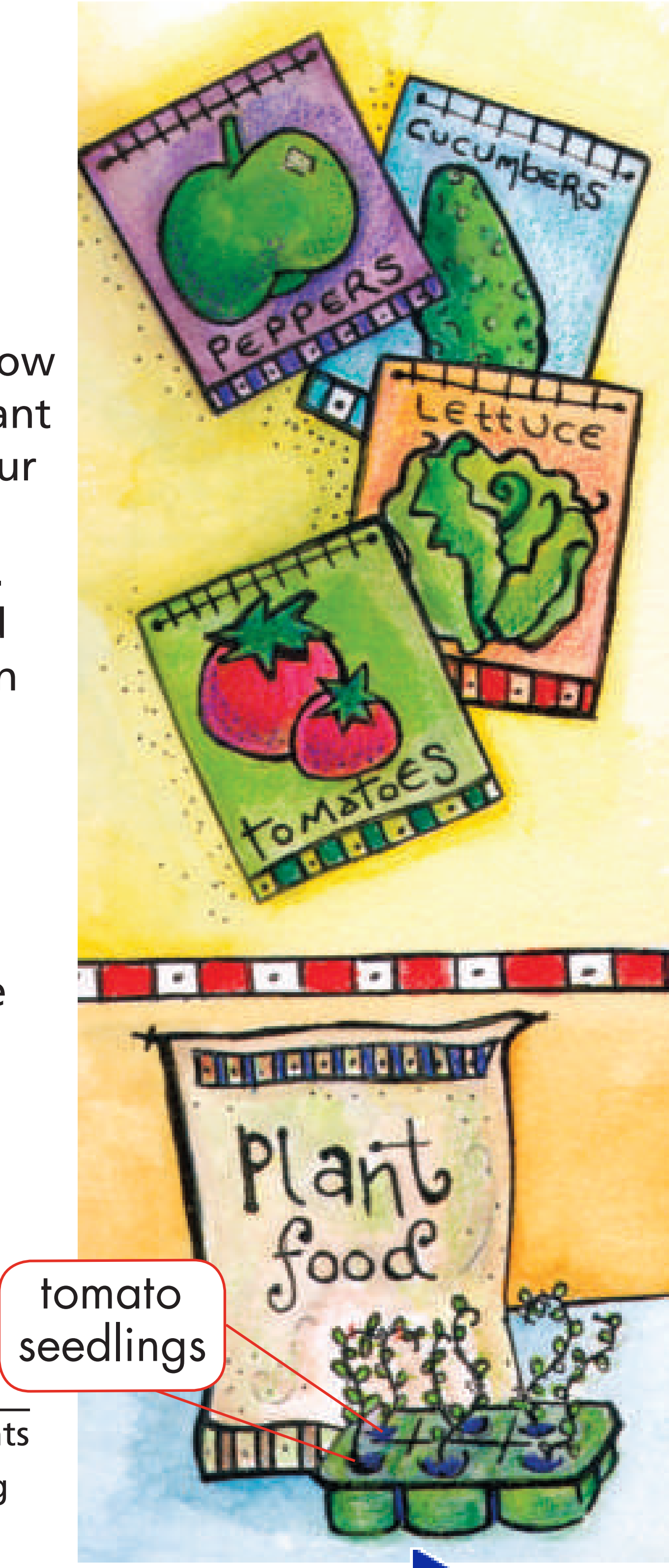
Tomatoes, carrots, peppers, and cucumbers are among the easiest vegetables to grow.

Getting Started in the Garden

Plants need a sunny spot to grow well. You can plant vegetables in your yard, pots, or in large containers.

You will need seeds. Or you can plant seedlings. You will need plant food to feed the plants.

Now you are ready to prepare the soil!



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seedlings: baby plants
soil: dirt for planting

Getting the Soil Ready

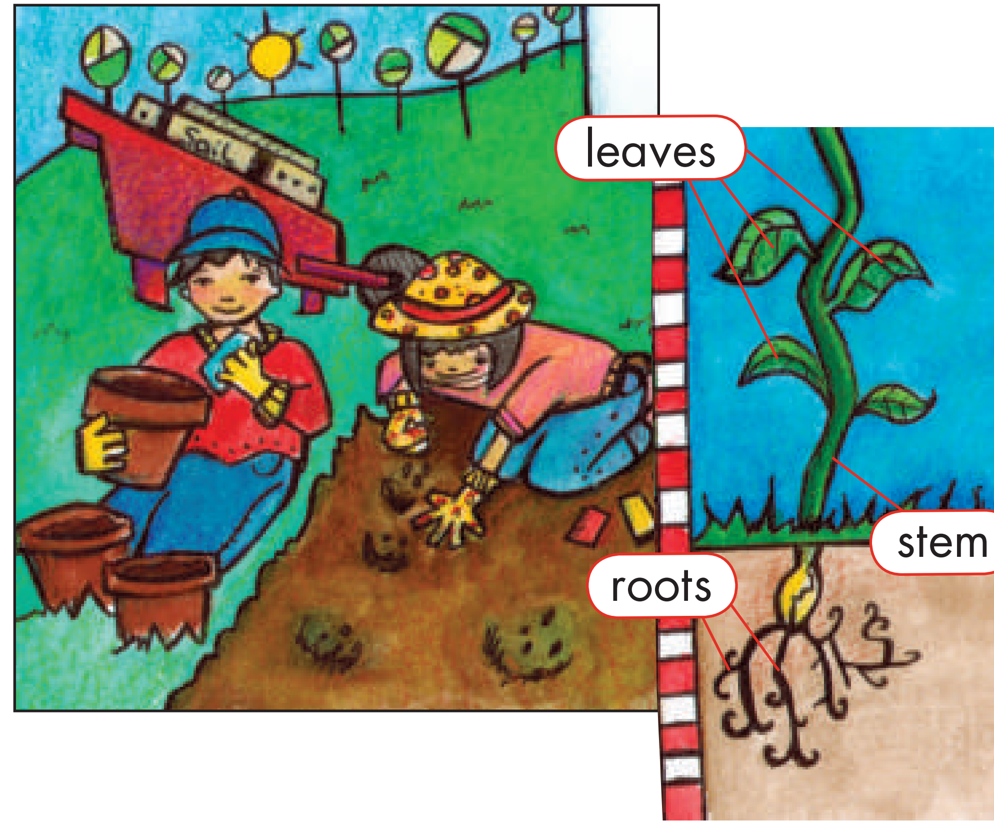
If you plant seeds or seedlings in the backyard soil, dig it with your shovel. The soil that you buy in bags is loose and ready to use.

Next, you can fertilize the soil with plant food. This helps your crops grow.

Your next step is to plant your vegetables.

shovel: a garden tool used for digging





Planting Your Seeds or Seedlings

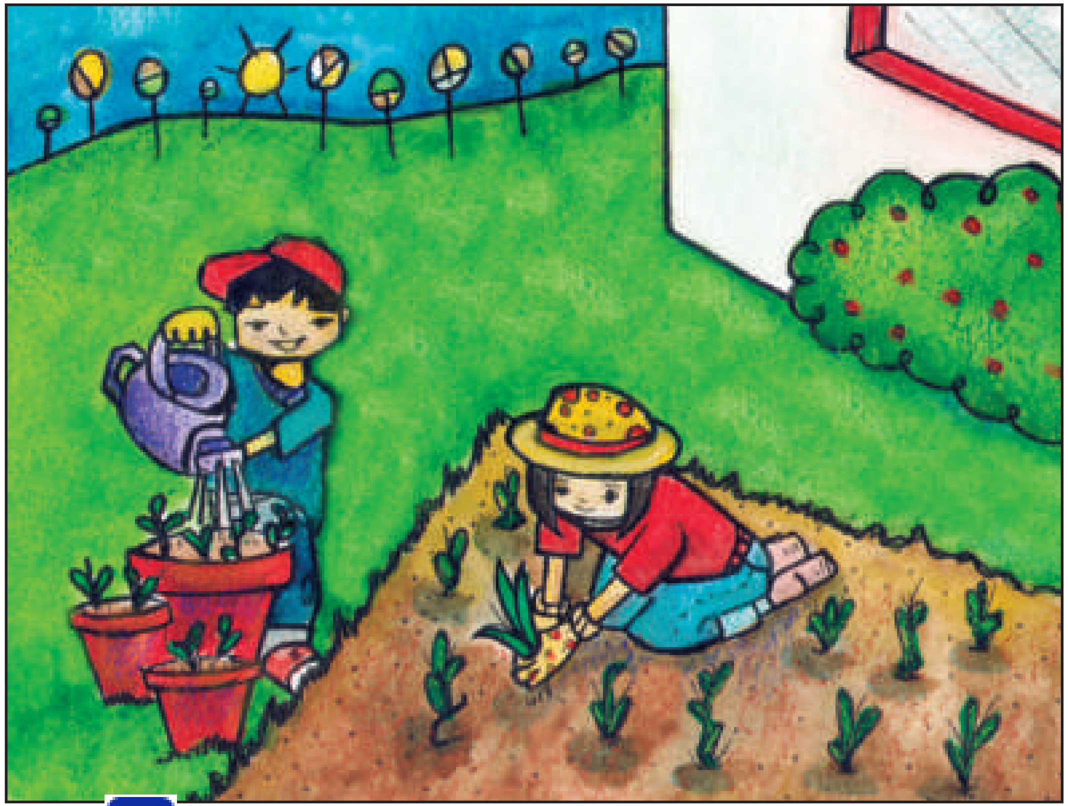
If you use seeds, put them into the soil. Cover the seeds completely with soil.

If you use seedlings, plant the roots in the soil. The roots are at the bottom. Leave the small green stems and leaves above the soil. Push the soil down with your hands or a tool.

Water your seeds or seedlings, and wait for your plants to grow.

roots: parts of plants that grow under the soil

stems: main trunks of plants



Taking Care of Your Garden

Plants need water and sunlight. They also need your help. You may need to pull up unwanted plants, or weeds, to make room for your new plants to grow healthy and strong.

Look at your plants carefully and often. Be sure there are no insects eating them. If you find insects, you can ask the people at a garden store how to protect your plants.

carefully: with a lot of care

Harvesting Is Fun!

In a few weeks, you will see your vegetables ready to be picked and eaten. This is harvesting time!

Enjoy picking your garden vegetables. Enjoy eating them!





Ask Mrs. Green Thumb

Dear Mrs. Green Thumb,

I grow lettuce in my backyard. It looks dry, and the weather is getting hotter.

I water the lettuce once a week. What should I do?

Johnny

Dear Johnny,

Your lettuce needs a lot more water! Water lettuce every day or two, especially in warm weather.

Mrs. Green Thumb

Talk About It

1. What vegetables would you like to grow in a vegetable garden?
2. Tell why you would choose these vegetables.

Write About It

3. On a separate sheet of paper, write a short letter to Mrs. Green Thumb. Ask her a question about gardening.

Extend Language

Persons who plant many vegetables or flowers can get green stains, or marks, on their hands. In English, saying that a person has a "green thumb" means that the person can grow plants very well. Why do you think some plant stems and leaves are called *greens?*

ISBN: 0-328-14165-8

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